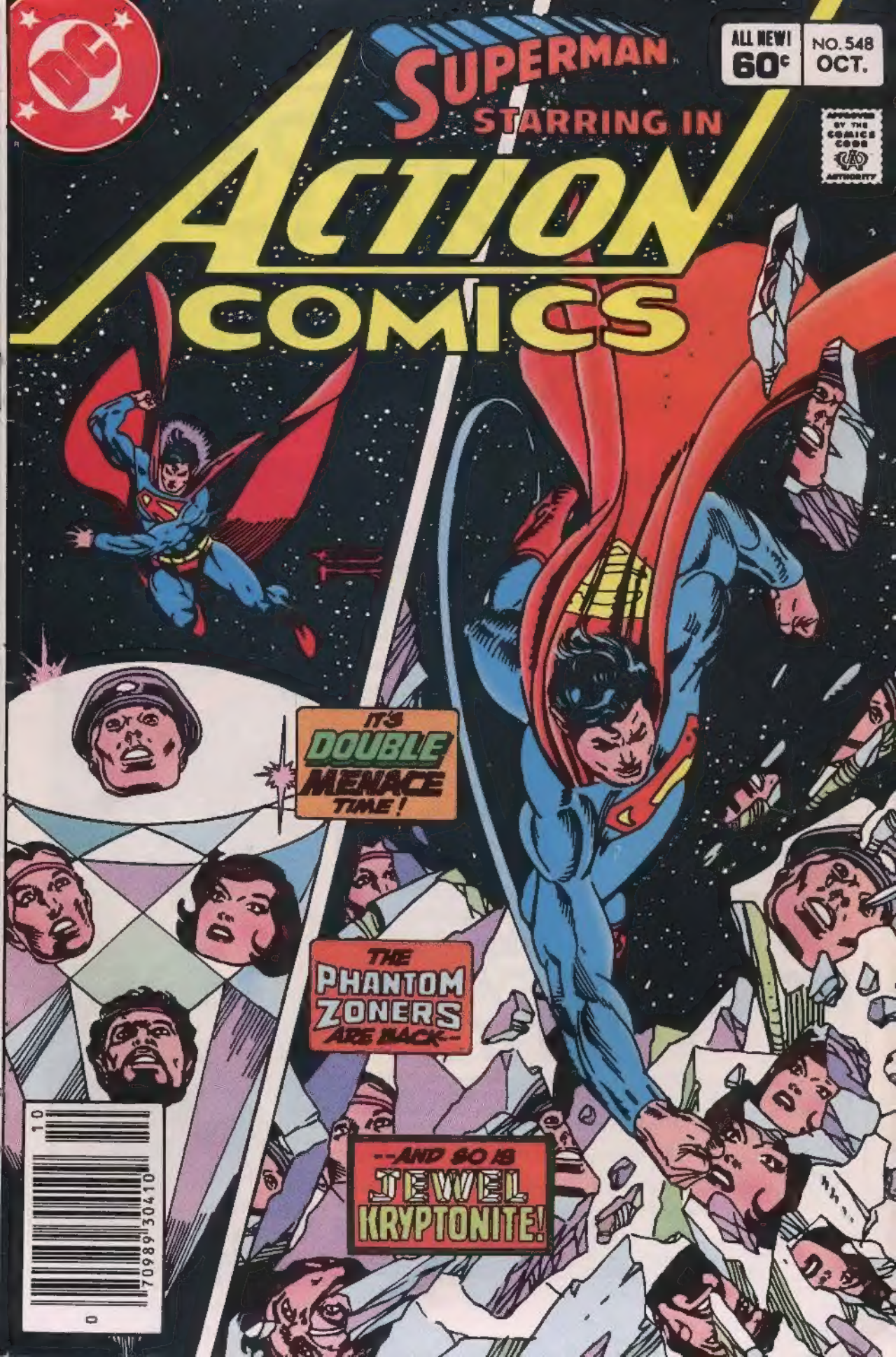
DC
SUPERMAN
STARRING IN
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NO. 548
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APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
IT'S
DOUBLE
MENACE
TIME!
THE
PHANTOM
ZONERS
ARE BACK--
--AND SO IS
JEWEL
KRYPTONITE!
10
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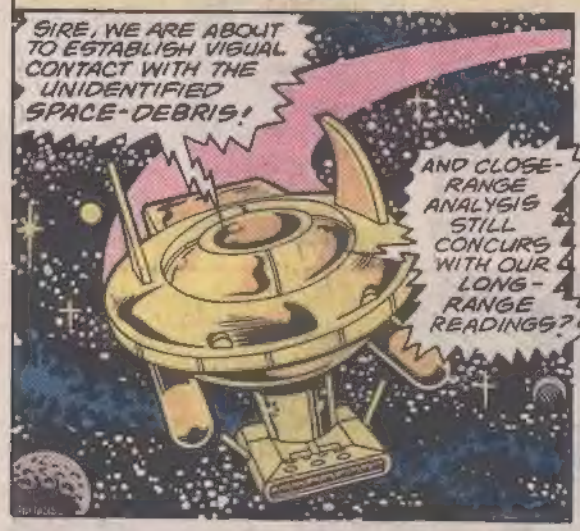
D

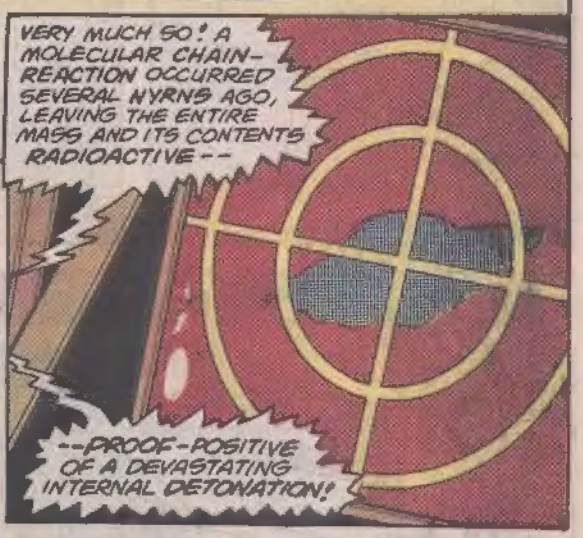
MUCH HAS HAPPENED IN THE *MAN OF STEEL'S* LIFE IN RECENT MONTHS--BUT IN TELLING IT ALL IN DETAIL, WE HAVE MISSED SOME OF HIS *OTHER* ADVENTURES. THIS IS ONE OF THEM--A KEY EVENT IN THE LIFE OF THE *ACTION ACE...*

SUPERMAN®

Created by JERRY SIEGEL & JOE SHUSTER

PROLOGUE


SIRE, WE ARE ABOUT TO ESTABLISH VISUAL CONTACT WITH THE UNIDENTIFIED SPACE-DEBRIS!
AND CLOSE-RANGE ANALYSIS STILL CONCURS WITH OUR LONG-RANGE READINGS?


VERY MUCH SO! A MOLECULAR CHAIN-REACTION OCCURRED SEVERAL NYRNS AGO, LEAVING THE ENTIRE MASS AND ITS CONTENTS RADIOACTIVE--
--PROOF-POSITIVE OF A DEVASTATING INTERNAL DETONATION!

THEN THIS DRIFTING DEBRIS IS FROM AN EXPLODED PLANET...A WORLD UNCANNILY IDENTICAL IN ELEMENTAL MAKE-UP TO THEIR WORLD!
THEIR WORLD?? INCONCEIVABLE!
INCONCEIVABLE OR NOT, WE MUST DETERMINE THE TRUTH!

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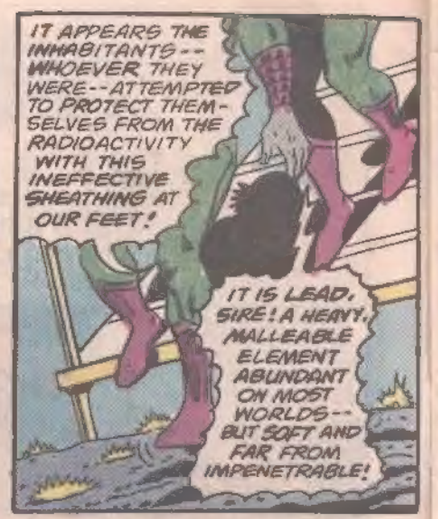
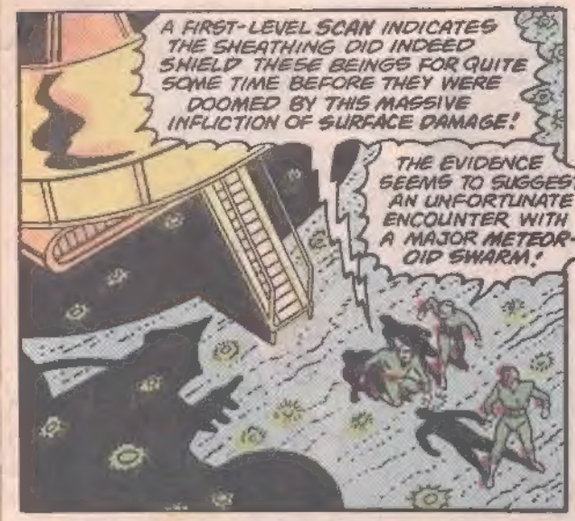
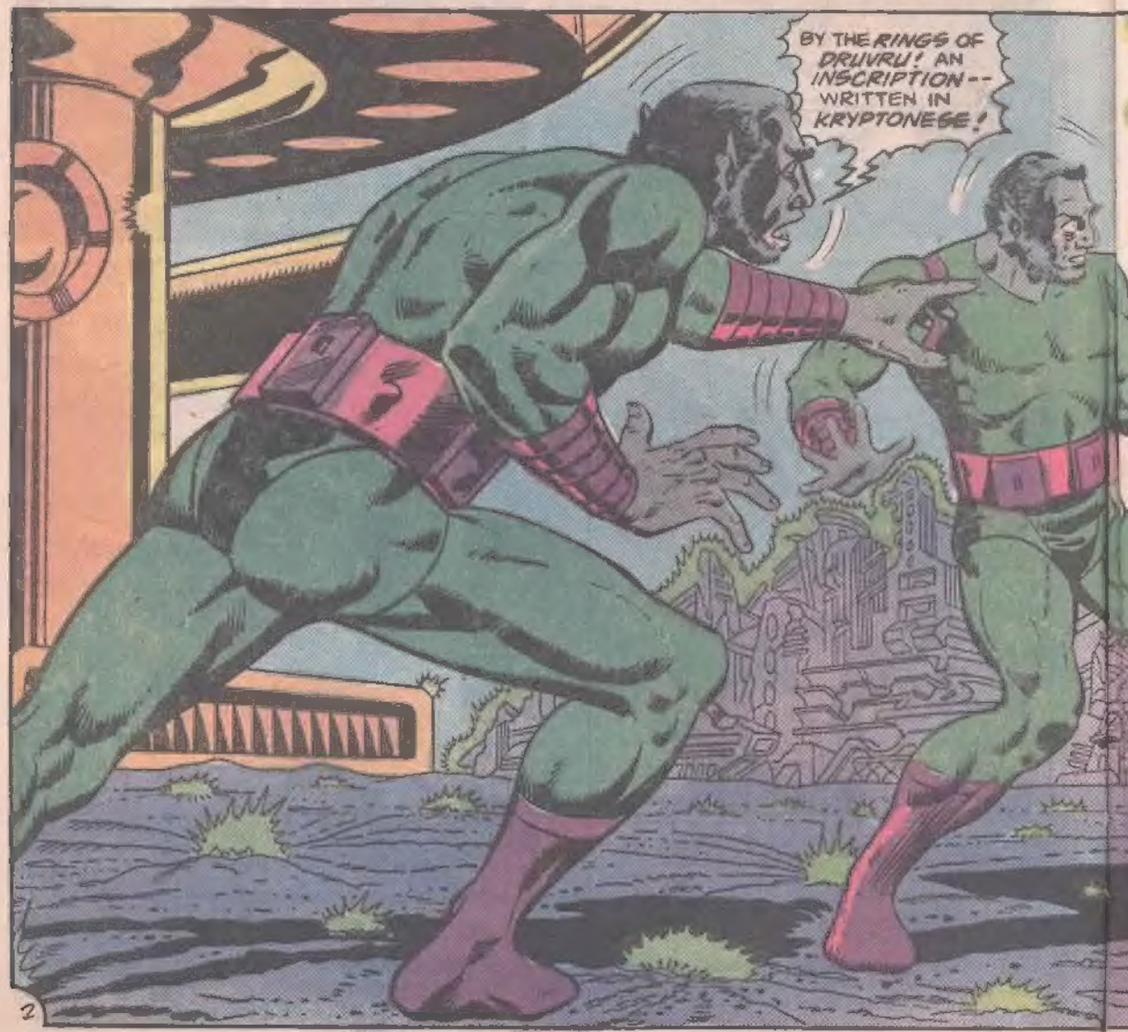

IT APPEARS THE INHABITANTS--WHOEVER THEY WERE--ATTEMPTED TO PROTECT THEMSELVES FROM THE RADIOACTIVITY WITH THIS INEFFECTIVE SHEATHING AT OUR FEET!
IT IS LEAD, SIRE! A HEAVY, MALLEABLE ELEMENT ABUNDANT ON MOST WORLDS--BUT SOFT AND FAR FROM IMPENETRABLE!


A FIRST-LEVEL SCAN INDICATES THE SHEATHING DID INDEED SHIELD THESE BEINGS FOR QUITE SOME TIME BEFORE THEY WERE DOOMED BY THIS MASSIVE INFLICTION OF SURFACE DAMAGE!
THE EVIDENCE SEEMS TO SUGGEST AN UNFORTUNATE ENCOUNTER WITH A MAJOR METEOROID SWARM!

WHAT IS IT, SIRE?
VERIFICATION OF WHAT WE ALL SUSPECTED... BUT WOULD NOT ACKNOWLEDGE TO EACH OTHER ALOUD!
THE BEINGS WHO LIVED AND DIED HERE WERE KRYPTONIANS!



"WHOEVER FINDS THIS MONOLITH, KNOW THAT YOU STAND BEFORE THE FINAL BASTION OF THE OBLITERATED PLANET KRYPTON... AND THE FINAL RESTING PLACE FOR THE SOULS OF THE LAST SURVIVORS OF THE NOBLE KRYPTONIAN RACE!
"LET IT BE KNOWN THAT WE CALLED OUR HOME ARGO CITY... AND THAT ITS CITIZENS DIED WITH HONOR AND DIGNITY!"

THE MIGHTY SUPERMAN HAS ALWAYS USED HIS VAST ARRAY OF SUPER-POWERS TO FIGHT FOR TRUTH AND JUSTICE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD! BUT LOCKED AWAY IN A HELLISH LIMBO THERE DWELLS A LEGION OF EVIL KRYPTONIANS... WHO BECOME JUST AS SUPER-POWERFUL WHEN THEY MANAGE TO--

"ESCAPE FROM THE PHANTOM ZONE!"

STORY CARY BATES • ART: ALEX SAVIUK & VINCE COLLETTA (PLUS PABLO MARCOS)
LETTERER: ADLT SHAPIRO • COLORIST: T. TOLLIN • EDITOR: JULIUS SCHWARTZ

METROPOLIS' JEWELRY ROW... A NEW EXHIBIT HALL HAS OPENED TO THE PRESS...WITH AN ASTONISHING DISPLAY...
BREATH-TAKING!
THEY BOAST IT'S THE LARGEST SYNTHETIC JEWEL IN THE WORLD!
INCREDIBLE! SLOWLY, MAN IS UNLOCKING ALL OF NATURE'S SECRETS!

--THE ELEMENTS COMPOSING THIS MAN-MADE JEWEL ARE BECOMING UNSTABLE!
THEY'RE REACTING DANGEROUSLY WITH EACH OTHER... TO CAUSE AN EXPLOSION!

CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

I DON'T FEEL COMFORTABLE USING THIS AS A DIVERSION--
--BUT I MUST--
--IF I'M TO STOP THIS SCARE--
--AT ITS SOURCE!
THIS ISN'T GOING TO BE EASY!
THE EXPLOSION COULD COME AT ANY SECOND--AND A BLAST THAT BIG COULD TAKE THE CITY WITH IT!
SO I'VE GOT TO REDUCE THE DANGER... FAST...
...BY REDUCING THE JEWEL!
;NNNGGHH!! NEED... ALL MY STRENGTH...
...TO CONDENSE THE ATOMS IN THE GEM...
...UNTIL IT'S DOWN...
5

--TO A SIZE THAT'S--
--MUCH--
--LESS--
NNGGHH!! MENACING!
BUT THE UNSTABLE COMPOSITION OF THE GEM IS STILL A THREAT!
...WHICH MEANS THIS JEWEL'S BETTER OFF HERE--
DEEP IN THE VOID OF SPACE--
--WHERE IT CAN HARM NO ONE!
CURIOUS HOW... SOMETHING SO BEAUTIFUL...
...COULD TURN OUT TO BE SO DEADLY!

CURIOUS, INDEED, SUPERMAN--FOR COINCIDENTALLY, IN A REGION OF SPACE MILES AWAY...
...AND EVEN FURTHER FROM THE RADIOACTIVE MASS OF RUBBLE THAT WAS ONCE ARGO CITY...
UPON CLOSER INSPECTION OF THIS DESOLATE AREA OF THE COSMOS, WE DISCOVER YET ANOTHER REMNANT FROM THE EXPLODED PLANET KRYPTON--BUT WE ARE NOT THE ONLY ONES...
AT LAST! WE HAVE FOUND IT!
EVEN THOUGH THE BOUNDARIES OF TIME AND SPACE HAVE NO MEANING IN OUR REALM--EVEN THOUGH THERE IS NO VESTIGE OF THE UNIVERSE WE CANNOT SEE--
--CONDUCTING THIS SEARCH HAS NEVERTHELESS BEEN A MAMMOTH TASK FOR US ALL!
THE "US" IN QUESTION--STILL ANOTHER VESTIGE OF THE ERSTWHILE PLANET KRYPTON ...SCORES OF DISEMBODIED SOULS WHO LONG AGO FORFEITED THEIR EXISTENCE IN OUR PHYSICAL UNIVERSE...
...FOR THEIR WORLD IS THE HELLISH REALM OF THE PHANTOM ZONE!
THE PHANTOM ZONE: THE DIMENSIONAL NETHERWORLD WHERE THE MOST FIENDISH OF KRYPTONIAN CRIMINALS WERE CONDEMNED TO SERVE OUT THEIR SENTENCES AS PUNISHMENT FOR CRIMES TOO REPREHENSIBLE TO MENTION...
AMONG THOSE INFAMOUS FELONS WHO "SURVIVED" KRYPTON'S DESTRUCTION--
GENERAL DRU-ZOD
FAORA HU-UL
JAX-UR
PROFESSOR VA-KOX
NOW THAT WE'RE FINALLY IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO THE ONE AND ONLY FRAGMENT OF JEWEL KRYPTONITE IN EXISTENCE IN THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE--
--IT IS TIME TO BRIEF THOSE AMONG YOU WHO WERE NOT PRESENT DURING OUR INITIAL ENCOUNTER WITH THE JEWEL K--
--AND OUR HATED ENEMY SUPERMAN!

I BELIEVE I AM THE BEST QUALIFIED TO EXPLAIN, GENERAL ZOD, CONSIDERING THE JEWEL KRYPTONITE WAS A PRODUCT OF MY OWN UNSURPASSED GENIUS!
YEARS AGO, I TRAVELED INTO THE PAST AND MATERIALIZED ON KRYPTON PRIOR TO THE EXPLOSION THAT DOOMED OUR RACE!
"MY OBJECTIVE -- TO ALTER THE ATOMIC STRUCTURE OF A PRE-SELECTED CHUNK OF CRYSTAL IN THE JEWEL MOUNTAINS BY TRANSMUTING CERTAIN OF ITS ELEMENTS...
WHEN KRYPTON BLOWS UP, MY ALTERATIONS WILL TRANSFORM THIS CRYSTAL INTO A FORM OF KRYPTONITE...WITH EXTRAORDINARY PROPERTIES!
"THUS, AFTER MY RETURN THROUGH TIME, SEVERAL FELLOW PHANTOM PRISONERS AND I DISCOVERED THE JEWEL K DRIFTING TOWARD EARTH, AND WERE ABLE TO USE IT TO MENACE OUR DETESTED FOE SUPERMAN...
THANKS TO MY TRANSMUTATION PROCESS, THE JEWEL K HAS THE ABILITY TO ABSORB OUR MENTAL CONCENTRATION...
"...AND IT CHANNELED OUR THOUGHTS INTO DESTRUCTIVE ENERGY WHICH BRIDGED THE VOID INTO THE MATERIAL UNIVERSE TO CAUSE SUPERMAN MUCH ANGUISH!
"ONCE THE SON OF JOR-EL UNCOVERED OUR PLAN, HE KNEW ONLY TOO WELL HOW DANGEROUS THE JEWEL K WAS -- SO HE HURLED IT INTO EARTH'S SUN..."
THE INSOLENT MEDDLER! HE IS AWARE KRYPTONITE IS THE ONE SUBSTANCE FROM KRYPTON THAT IS NOT INDESTRUCTIBLE!
THE SUN WILL VAPORIZE IT!
THANK YOU, JAX-UR! AN EXCELLENT SUMMATION. PRECISE AND TO THE POINT!
FORTUNATELY, OUR CAPED FOE IS FORMIDABLE BUT NOT INFALLIBLE! HE HAD DESTROYED THAT PORTION OF THE JEWEL K...
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CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING

"...BUT HE OVERLOOKED THE OTHER FRAGMENT WE HAD EARLIER EXPOSED HIM TO IN AN EFFORT TO CONVINCE HIM IT HAD MADE HIM A MENACE!
"HE HAD HURLED THAT PIECE INTO OUTER SPACE..."
...BUT AFTER A DILIGENT SEARCH, WE HAVE FOUND IT--AND ACCORDING TO JAX-UR, THE JEWEL IS MORE RECEPTIVE THAN EVER TO OUR MENTAL EMANATIONS!
CORRECT, GENERAL --ALTHOUGH I CANNOT PROMISE THE EXPERIMENT YOU HAVE PROPOSED WILL BE A SUCCESS!
NEVERTHELESS WE MUST MAKE THE ATTEMPT!
WE ARE ALL AGREED, FAORA! IF OPERATION BREAKTHROUGH DOES SUCCEED...
...THERE MUST BE NO DOUBT THOSE OF US WHO SURVIVE WILL DO OUR KRYPTONIAN DUTY!
THUS I PROPOSE WE ALL VOICE THE SACRED OATH OF HADRAD...
...EACH OF US VOWING TO SACRIFICE HIS OR HER LIFE, IF NECESSARY, TO VANQUISH OUR MOST DESPISED AND VILE FOE!
BY THE COLOSSUS OF HADRAD, I SWEAR I SHALL!
AS DO I!
AND I!
AND I, BY HADRAD!
VERY WELL, THEN! THE TIME HAS COME FOR ALL OF US TO CONCENTRATE ON OUR OBJECTIVE...
...DIRECTING OUR MENTAL ENERGIES OUTWARD AS WE FOCUS ON THE CRYSTALLINE CENTER OF THE JEWEL KRYPTONITE!
FOCUS...
FOCUS...

ZZZZAA-BLATTTT
BUT WE LEAVE THE WORLD OF PHANTOMS AT THIS CRUCIAL MOMENT...
...AND RETURN OUR ATTENTION TO A MATERIAL WORLD, SPINNING MILLIONS OF MILES AWAY IN THE MILKY WAY GALAXY...
P-PLEASE DON'T HURT ME!
YOU HEARD US, SUCKER! YOUR MONEY OR YOUR LIFE! LET'S SEE SOME GREEN!
YEAH-- THAT'S MORE LIKE IT!
HOT TAMALES! MR. BUSINESSMAN WAS CARRYIN' AROUND A WAD OF $100 BILLS! THIS IS OUR LUCKY NIGHT!
BUT IT SURE AS SPIT AIN'T YOUR LUCKY NIGHT, SUCKER!
}UNNNGH!
WHUMP
OOOH...
LET'S BLOW THIS TURF, MAN!
I'M RIGHT BEHIND YOU, BRO!

BUT AS THE TWO TEEN TOUGHS HOT-FOOT IT OUT OF THE ALLEY...
CREE-IPES! SOMETHIN'S GOT ME BY THE COLLAR!
ME, TOO -- I'M RUNNIN' ON AIR!
THAT'S RIGHT, PUNK! YOU AND YOUR FELLOW MUGGER HAVE JUST RUN OUT ON YOUR LAST VICTIM!
ULP! IT'S THE MAN WITH THE BIG RED S!
PUT US DOWN, YOU CAPED CREEP!
YOU GOT IT, PAL--
--EVEN THOUGH YOU FORGOT TO SAY PLEASE!
YIEEE! HE DROPPED US!
WE'LL BE KILLED!
OKAY, I'LL SAVE YOU! AHH...
LOOKS LIKE YOU TWO HAD A BUSY NIGHT!
WE'RE LOSIN' OUR TAKE!
IT'S BETTER'N LOSIN' OUR LIVES!
AND, A MOMENT LATER.
SUPERMAN! I'M SURE GLAD TO SEE YOU... ALTHOUGH MY ACHING GUT SURE W.SHES YOU GOT HERE SOONER!
NOT TO WORRY, SIR!
MY X-RAY VISION TELLS ME YOUR ABDOMEN SUSTAINED NO SERIOUS DAMAGE!

I HAVE TO LEAVE THE REST OF THE MUGGERS' LOOT AT THE POLICE STATION -- BUT I'LL BE HAPPY TO DROP YOU OFF WHEREVER YOU'RE GOING...
5487 LARGO STREET SUPERMAN -- AND THANKS FOR THE LIFT!
BY THE WAY... WHAT DID YOU DO WITH THOSE TWO STREET PUNKS?
SUPERMAN SAYS: KEEP
HELP
SEE FOR YOURSELF, SIR! THEY'LL BE IN GOOD HANDS TILL I NOTIFY THE POLICE WHERE TO PICK THEM UP!
SOON, AT THE MAMMOTH GALAXY BUILDING IN DOWNTOWN METROPOLIS...
DAILY PLANET
WGBS
IF ANYONE ON THE DAILY PLANET FLOOR NOTICED CLARK KENT HAS BEEN MISSING... THEY'LL FIGURE I WAS BUSY ON THE WGBS-TV FLOOR...
...AND VICE VERSA! HAVING TWO JOBS CAN SOMETIMES BE A DEFINITE ADVANTAGE!
...SO OUR LEAD STORY ON PAGE ONE WILL BE THE SUPERMAN RESCUE ON JEWELRY ROW -- WITH A ONE-COLUMN SPREAD FOR THE CRIME RATE STORY ON PAGE ONE AS WELL!
YOU THINK STATISTICS ARE THAT IMPORTANT, CHIEF?
ABOUT TIME YOU BUTTED IN SOMEWHERE, CLARK KENT!
12

WHAT'S THE BIG POW-WOW ABOUT, LOIS?
JIMMY CAN'T UNDERSTAND WHY I WANT A DOWNBEAT STORY RIGHT BELOW THE SUPERMAN YARN FOR THE NEXT EDITION!
I'M ALL FOR GIVING COMPLETE COVERAGE TO SUPERMAN'S FEATS... BUT UNFORTUNATELY, NOT EVEN THE METROPOLIS MARVEL CAN BE EVERYWHERE HE'S NEEDED!
DAILY
SUPERMAN STOPS JEWELRY MENACE
CRIME RATE STILL SOARS
THE CITY STILL HAS A SERIOUS CRIME PROBLEM ON ITS STREETS...
...AND THE PLANET WOULD BE SHIRKING ITS PUBLIC DUTY IF IT DIDN'T DEVOTE AMPLE ATTENTION TO SUCH A STORY!
BUT, HEY--IT'S NOT SUPERMAN'S FAULT! WHO COULD COUNT HOW MANY TIMES MY SUPER-PAL SAVED THIS CITY... EVEN THE WHOLE WORLD... FROM ONE CATASTROPHE AFTER ANOTHER?
NO ONE DISPUTES THAT SUPERMAN HAS SAVED MILLIONS OF LIVES--IN FACT, THE ENTIRE HUMAN RACE--MANY TIMES OVER! BUT HE IS, AFTER ALL, ONLY ONE MAN!
?!? THAT'S ODD!
CLARK SLIPPED OUT WITHOUT SAYING A WORD!
WHAT WE NEED IS AN ARMY OF SUPERMEN! ONLY THEN WOULD CITIES LIKE METROPOLIS BE SAFE FOR EVERY CITIZEN, DAY OR NIGHT!
I AGREE WITH YOU, PERRY, ONE HUNDRED PERCENT!
SOMETIMES I WISH THERE WERE A WHOLE ARMY OF SUPER-KRYPTONIANS LIKE ME WATCHING OVER THE WORLD, TOO!
DON'T WISH TOO HARD... FOR IT MAY COME TRUE--BUT NOT IN THE WAY YOU EXPECT! LET'S GO INTO OUTER SPACE, WHERE--

I AM UTTERLY FLABBERGASTED! AFTER BELIEVING FOR ALL THESE VUMUNS THAT THE KRYPTONIAN RACE WAS EXTINCT!
EVEN THOUGH WHAT WE ARE SEEING ARE ONLY RECORDED VISUAL IMAGES, THE EFFECT IS MOST PROFOUND!
MOST TORTUROUS IS A MORE APT DESCRIPTION! WHAT WE ARE WITNESSING IS THE RECORD OF A CATASTROPHE!
ON A SMALLER SCALE THAN KRYPTON'S DEMISE BUT A TRAGEDY ALL THE SAME!
WE ARE OBSERVING A CALAMITY WHICH LEFT ARGO CITY A LIFELESS RUIN!
A DEVASTATING METEOR SWARM WAS THE CULPRIT! IT WREAKED HAVOC WITH THE PROTECTIVE LEAD SHEATHING-- EXPOSING THE KRYPTONIANS TO THE LETHAL RADIATION BENEATH!
ONCE THE METEORS STRUCK, THEIR DEATHS WERE INEVITABLE... THOUGH NOT IMMEDIATE!
I'LL SCAN AHEAD TO THE SECTIONS OF THIS VISI-RECORD I OBSERVED WHILE THE REST OF YOU WERE INVESTIGATING OUTSIDE!
I SUGGEST YOU STEEL YOURSELF FOR A SHOCK!
AS YOU CAN SEE ONE COUPLE HAD THE FORESIGHT TO PREPARE FOR THEIR ONLY OFFSPRING A MEANS OF SURVIVAL-- AN ESCAPE-ROCKET!
THE KRYPTONITE RADIATION POISONING WILL SOON CLAIM THE LIFE OF EVERY ARGO CITY CITIZEN--
--BUT NOT YOU, DEAR KARA!

THIS ROCKET WILL TAKE YOU TO THE PLANET EARTH... WHERE YOU WILL JOIN YOUR COUSIN KAL-EL!
UNDER EARTH'S YELLOW SUN AND LIGHTER GRAVITY, YOU WILL GAIN THE SAME WONDROUS POWERS HE HAS!
FAREWELL, DAUGHTER! SOON YOU SHALL BE AT KAL-EL'S SIDE!
AND NEVER FORGET-- WE SHALL BE WITH YOU ALWAYS... IN SPIRIT!
AND NOW... RAO-SPEED!
MOTHER... FATHER... ;SOB;
THEN THIS MEANS THAT THERE IS NOT JUST ONE... BUT TWO KRYPTONIAN SURVIVORS STILL ALIVE!
THE CONCLUSION SEEMS IRREFUTABLE DOES IT NOT?
ACCORDING TO THE VISI-RECORD, THIS KARA AND KAL-EL NOW DWELL ON A PLANET KNOWN AS EARTH!
BUT CONSIDERING THE VAST NUMBER OF HABITABLE WORLDS THROUGHOUT THIS GALAXY, THE ODDS ARE AGAINST OUR LOCATING THIS REFUGE PLANET!
ON THE CONTRARY, LYLK! WE SHALL ENCOUNTER NO DIFFICULTY WHATSOEVER! OUR INSTRUMENTS HAVE DETECTED A FAINT TRAIL...
...A TRAIL OF KRYPTONIAN IONS LEFT BEHIND BY THE ESCAPE VESSEL WHICH TRANSPORTED THE FEMALE TO SAFETY!
AS LONG AS THE IONS LEAD US TO THE GENERAL VICINITY OF THIS EARTH'S SECTOR OF THE GALAXY, OUR BIO-SCANNERS CAN COMPLETE THE SEARCH!
TWO KRYPTONIANS... ON A WORLD HIDDEN SOMEWHERE WITHIN THIS SPIRAL GALAXY! THE PROSPECT IS NO LESS THAN OVERWHELMING!
INDEED SO! IT IS ALMOST AS IF SOME HIGHER POWER HAS CHOSEN TO BESTOW ON US A SECOND CHANCE!

THE UPPER REACHES OF EARTH'S IONOSPHERE. SEVERAL DAYS LATER...
PLEASE FASTEN YOUR SEATBELTS! WE ARE NOW BEGINNING OUR DESCENT TO METROPOLIS!
EH? DID YOU SEE WHAT JUST FLASHED ACROSS OUR FLIGHT-PATH?
ALL I SEE IS UNLIMITED VISIBILITY AND RUNWAY NINE!
FOR AN INSTANT I THOUGHT I SAW FOUR--
AW, SKIP IT!
LET'S BRING THIS BIRD IN AND HIT THE METROPOLIS NIGHT-SPOTS!
BUT IN A FOREST ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE TEEMING METROPOLIS BELOW-- A SUDDEN DISTURBANCE HAS FRIGHTENED THE NATURAL WILDLIFE...
THE SHEER STRENGTH COURSING THROUGH ME UNDER THESE YELLOW SOLAR RAYS IS AWESOME!
ONCE AGAIN WE KNOW WHAT IT IS LIKE TO POSSESS THE SUPER-POWERS KAL-EL HAS WIELDED SINCE HIS INFANCY!
I MUST EXPERIMENT FURTHER WITH THESE AMAZING ABILITIES!
16

YOU'LL NOT FLEX ANOTHER SUPER-ENERGIZED MUSCLE, TYB-OL NOT UNLESS GENERAL ZOD SO ORDERS IT!
I HAD TO ENDURE YOUR IMPUDENCE WHEN WE WERE PRISONERS IN THE ZONE, FAORA--BUT OUT HERE, I DO NOT!
STAND ASIDE!
THERE--! THIS TIME I GIVE YOU BUT A GENTLE REMINDER OF MY MASTERY OF HORU-KANU!*
PROVOKE ME AGAIN AND YOU WILL NOT SURVIVE THE NEXT DEMONSTRATION!
CRAK
*HORU-KANU, THE DEADLIEST OF ALL MARTIAL ARTS ON KRYPTON --LETHAL TO EVEN A SUPER-KRYPTONIAN! --JULIE
THANK YOU, FAORA! LET US TRUST YOU DO NOT HAVE TO BE REPRIMANDED AGAIN, TYB-OL--THIS IS TO BE A MILITARY OPERATION UNDER MY COMMAND!
DO NOT FORGET YOU TOOK THE OATH OF HADRAD WITH THE REST OF US,,,VOWING TO GIVE YOUR LIFE IF NECESSARY TO ERADICATE OUR COMMON FOE!
I AM SORRY, GENERAL!
NOT SURPRISING, TYB-OL, CONSIDERING YOU AND MURKK HAVE HAD LITTLE TIME OUTSIDE THE ZONE BEFORE--AND THEN ONLY WHEN WE ALL ESCAPED!
OUR PREVIOUS ESCAPES HAVE MADE FAORA AND MYSELF MORE ADEPT AT FUNCTIONING AS SUPER-BEINGS!
SEVERAL MOMENTS LATER, AFTER AN INTENSE BRIEFING, WHICH GENERAL ZOD HAS DISPENSED HIS ORDERS..
IT IS UNFORTUNATE THE MENTAL BURST WE CHANNELED THROUGH THE JEWEL KRYPTONITE DID NOT CREATE A GAP WIDE ENOUGH FOR JAX-UR TO SLIP THROUGH WITH US!
AGREED. BUT WE KNEW THERE WOULD BE A HIGH VARIABLE FOR FAILURE WITH ANY SUCH UNTRIED ESCAPE MANEUVER!
17
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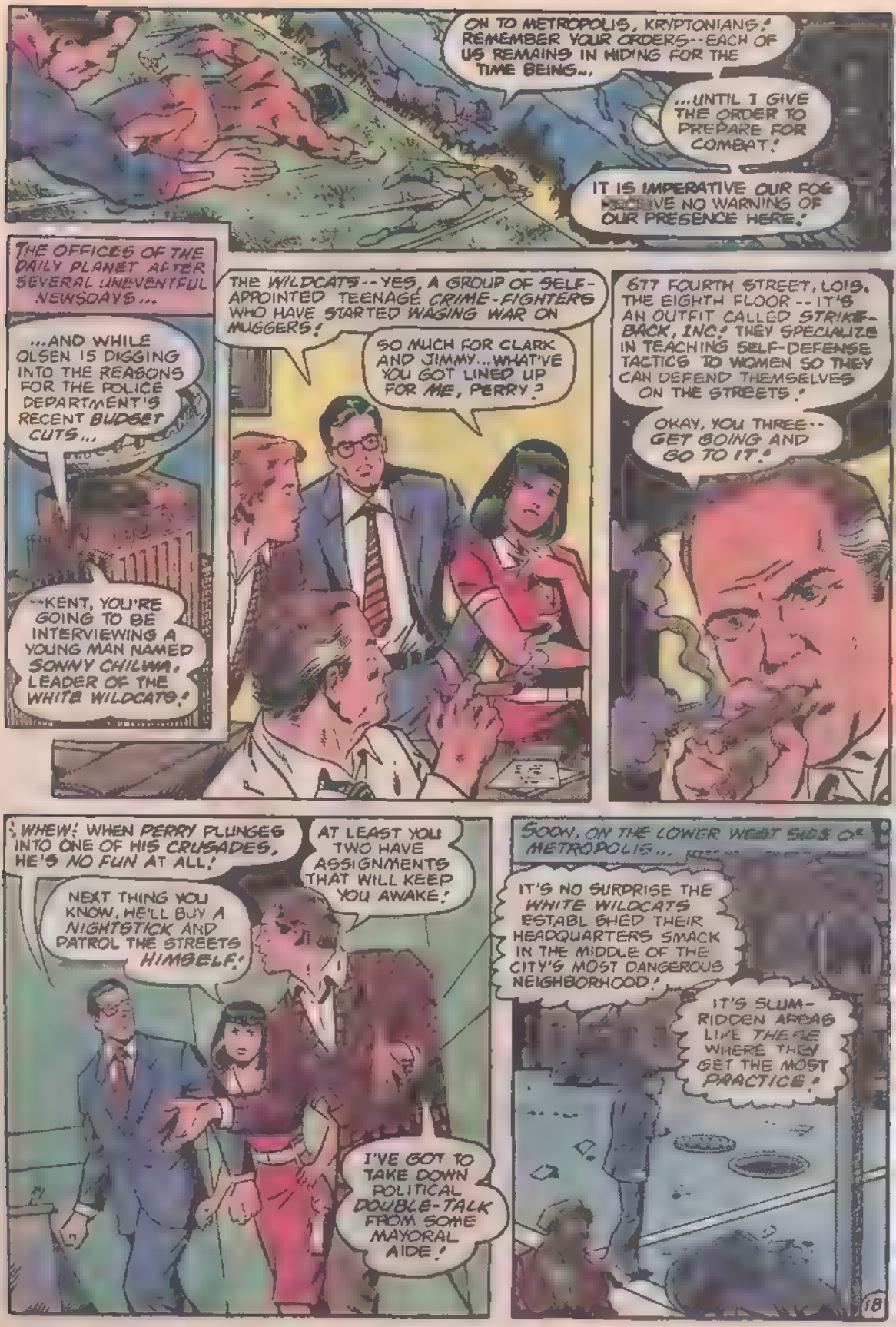
ON TO METROPOLIS, KRYPTONIANS! REMEMBER YOUR ORDERS--EACH OF US REMAINS IN HIDING FOR THE TIME BEING...
...UNTIL I GIVE THE ORDER TO PREPARE FOR COMBAT!
IT IS IMPERATIVE OUR FOE RECEIVE NO WARNING OF OUR PRESENCE HERE!
THE OFFICES OF THE DAILY PLANET AFTER SEVERAL UNEVENTFUL NEWSDAYS...
...AND WHILE OLSEN IS DIGGING INTO THE REASONS FOR THE POLICE DEPARTMENT'S RECENT BUDGET CUTS...
--KENT, YOU'RE GOING TO BE INTERVIEWING A YOUNG MAN NAMED SONNY CHILWA, LEADER OF THE WHITE WILDCATS!
THE WILDCATS--YES, A GROUP OF SELF-APPOINTED TEENAGE CRIME-FIGHTERS WHO HAVE STARTED WAGING WAR ON MUGGERS!
SO MUCH FOR CLARK AND JIMMY...WHAT'VE YOU GOT LINED UP FOR ME, PERRY?
677 FOURTH STREET, LOIS. THE EIGHTH FLOOR--IT'S AN OUTFIT CALLED STRIKE-BACK, INC! THEY SPECIALIZE IN TEACHING SELF-DEFENSE TACTICS TO WOMEN SO THEY CAN DEFEND THEMSELVES ON THE STREETS!
OKAY, YOU THREE--GET GOING AND GO TO IT!
WHEW! WHEN PERRY PLUNGES INTO ONE OF HIS CRUSADES, HE'S NO FUN AT ALL!
NEXT THING YOU KNOW, HE'LL BUY A NIGHTSTICK AND PATROL THE STREETS HIMSELF!
AT LEAST YOU TWO HAVE ASSIGNMENTS THAT WILL KEEP YOU AWAKE!
I'VE GOT TO TAKE DOWN POLITICAL DOUBLE-TALK FROM SOME MAYORAL AIDE!
SOON, ON THE LOWER WEST SIDE OF METROPOLIS...
IT'S NO SURPRISE THE WHITE WILDCATS ESTABLISHED THEIR HEADQUARTERS SMACK IN THE MIDDLE OF THE CITY'S MOST DANGEROUS NEIGHBORHOOD!
IT'S SLUM-RIDDEN AREAS LIKE THESE WHERE THEY GET THE MOST PRACTICE!
18

HELLO.. S ANYBODY UP THERE..? PLEASE HELP ME...!
A VOICE OF SOMEONE IN TROUBLE!
GREAT SCOTT! WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU?
I-I FELL IN THIS MANHOLE... I THINK MY LEG'S BROKEN! CAN YOU COME DOWN AND TAKE A LOOK, MISTER?
WHY, CERTAINLY! I'LL BE-- UHHH--!
C'MON DOWN, SUCKER! MICK AND ME WERE GETTIN' LONESOME!
WHADDAYA KNOW! ME AN' MY LEG SUDDENLY MADE ONE OF THEM MIRACLE RECOVERIES!
WH-WHAT IS THIS ALL ABOUT?
SPLASH!
YOU'RE ABOUT TO BE FLEECED IN THE SEWER-- WHERE IT WON'T DO YOU NO GOOD TO YELL FOR HELP!
HEY... I'VE SEEN THIS DUDE SOMEWHERE BEFORE...
BUT WHAT THEY DON'T SEE...
...IS THE SILENT STREAM OF SUPER-SUCTION BREATH I'M DRAWING FROM WAY DOWN THE TUNNEL!
YEAH--NOW I GOT IT--THIS IS CLARK KENT--THE SIX O'CLOCK NEWSGUY!
HE OUGHTA BE PACKIN' PLENTY OF GREEN!

LET'S SEE THE WALLET BEFORE I CUT MYSELF UP A TV ANCHORMAN!
HOLD IT! THAT NOISE--
IT'S A FLASH-FLOOD--COMIN' THIS WAY!
WHERE'D IT COME FROM? THE TUNNEL WAS DRY TEN MINUTES AGO!
WE'LL DROWN LIKE RATS!
FOOSSHH
YIEEE!
SLURRP!
AS I CALCULATED--MY SUCTION-BREATH WHISKED ITS WAY THROUGH MILES OF SEWER TUNNELS TO WHIP THOUSANDS OF GALLONS OF WATER THIS WAY!
A FEW MINUTES LATER
WELCOME TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD, SIR! LOOKS LIKE YOU ALREADY MET MICK AND AMOS, TWO OF OUR LOCAL SEWER RATS!
SONNY CHILWA, I PRESUME?
AH, MR. KENT--AT YOUR SERVICE, SIR--NOT THAT IT LOOKS LIKE YOU NEEDED ANY HELP FROM THE WHITE WILDCATS!
ER...A WATER MAIN MUST'VE BROKEN DOWN THERE WHILE THEY WERE TRYING TO MUG ME!

WE WERE LUCKY TO GET OUT ALIVE! IF YOU'RE WONDERING HOW I GOT DOWN THERE--
HOW IT HAPPENED WAS BETWEEN YOU AND THEM!
BESIDES, YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE INTERVIEWING US, REMEMBER?
SOON AS YOU FEEL UP TO IT, WE'LL SHOW YOU WHAT ONE OF OUR ANTI-CRIME TRAINING SESSIONS LOOKS LIKE!
I'M READY NOW, SONNY! LEAD THE WAY!
MEANWHILE, LOIS LANE CARRIES OUT HER ASSIGNMENT WITH FRIEND AND TV-NEWSWOMAN LANA LANG...
A 7TH-FLOOR WALK-UP? YOU'VE GOT TO BE KIDDING!
STRIKE-BACK INC. 7TH FLOOR
THINK OF IT AS EXERCISE, LANA... NOT TO MENTION THE CALORIES WE'LL BE BURNING OFF ON THE WAY UP!
MOMENTS LATER...
PRETTY GOOD, MYRNA-- ONLY NEXT TIME, SHIFT YOUR WEIGHT ON THE SAME LEG YOU'RE USING TO PIVOT!
YES, MRS. SIMPSON!
SINCE MYRNA WAS THE LAST STUDENT TO SPAR THIS AFTERNOON, WE'LL ADJOURN FOR THE DAY AND--
EXCUSE ME! I'M LOIS LANE... FROM THE DAILY PLANET.
I'M DOING A STORY ON FEMALE SELF-DEFENSE...
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CONTINUED ON 2 NP PAGE FOLLOWING

I WAS WONDERING IF YOU'D GIVE ME A FEW POINTERS, MRS. SIMPSON! A DEMONSTRATION COULD HELP MY ARTICLE!
BUT OF COURSE, LANE! I WILL BE HAPPY TO COMPLY!

LOIS NEGLECTED TO MENTION THAT SHE'S BECOME QUITE A SELF-DEFENSE EXPERT HERSELF DURING THE COURSE OF HER SCOOP-CHASING ADVENTURES!
SIMPSON WILL FIND OUT SHE'S NO PUSHOVER!

BUT MERELY HAVE THE TWO COMBATANTS COME TO GRIPS WHEN...
YOU CAME AT ME WITH SOME RATHER UNORTHODOX MOVES, LANE!
BUT AS YOU'VE FOUND OUT TO YOUR OBVIOUS SURPRISE--

--THERE ARE COUNTER-MOVES FOR EVEN THE MOST WELL-EXECUTED COMBAT TACTICS!
ONE ONLY NEED KNOW HOW TO APPLY THEM!
OOF!

I TRUST YOU NOW APPRECIATE HOW EFFECTIVE OUR "STRIKE-BACK" TRAINING CAN BE IN A LIFE-AND-DEATH SITUATION?
UHH...MORE THAN YOU KNOW, MRS. SIMPSON! YOU'VE REALLY ENLIGHTENED ME!

MEANWHILE, FURTHER DOWNTOWN...
...AND THE OWNERS OF THIS BUILDING HAVE BEEN LETTING US USE THEIR ROOF AS A "TRAINING FIELD" FOR OUR WILDCATS!
YOU'RE IN FOR AN EYE-FUL TODAY, MR. KENT! WAIT'LL YOU GET A LOAD OF THE NEW HARDWARE THE COMMANDANT RIGGED FOR US!
ER... THE COMMANDANT?
A FORMER MILITARY MAN WHO JOINED OUR GROUP JUST A FEW DAYS AGO! ALREADY HE'S DOUBLED OUR EFFECTIVENESS!
I TOLD HIM THE PRESS WOULD BE INTERVIEWING OUR GROUP... BUT THE COMMANDANT DECIDED TO PASS!
I SEE! PUBLICITY-SHY, IS HE?
BETTER GET OUT YOUR NOTEPAD, MR. KENT! YOU'RE GONNA WANT TO WRITE DOWN WHAT YOU'RE ABOUT TO SEE!
WE WILDCATS GOT A NEW APPROACH TO CRIME-FIGHTING!
GREAT SCOTT! YOU'RE NOT KIDDING!
FROM NOW ON, THE BAD GUYS ARE NEVER GONNA KNOW WHEN OR WHERE ONE OF US IS GONNA SWOOP DOWN ON 'EM--
--CAUSE STARTING NOW, US WILDCATS ARE GONNA BE WATCHING OVER METROPOLIS FROM THE AIR!
SOON AS WE'VE HAD ENOUGH PRACTICE ADAPTING OUR COMBAT MOVES FOR AIRBORNE MANEUVERS, WE'LL BE READY TO PATROL THE SKIES!
AS YOU SEE... THE ROCKET-PACKS WORK LIKE A CHARM... JUST LIKE THE COMMANDANT PROMISED!

ER...YOU MEAN YOUR COMMANDANT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS AMAZING FLYING DEMONSTRATION?
RIGHT ON!
HE DESIGNED AND BUILT ALL THE ROCKET-PACKS HIMSELF...BUT DON'T ASK US HOW!
MAYBE HE'S ONE OF THOSE SCIENTIFIC GENIUS TYPES WHEN HE'S OUTA UNIFORM! HA HA!
SPEAKING OF UNIFORMS...OUR NEW WILDCAT THREADS WERE ANOTHER ONE OF HIS TERRIFIC IDEAS! WHADDYA THINK--SNAZZY, RIGHT?
I-I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY!
AND THAT'S NO FIB! MY X-RAY VISION IS TELLING ME WHAT I SUSPECTED--THE TECHNOLOGY THAT WENT INTO THESE ROCKET-PACKS IS FAR BEYOND 1983 ADVANCES IN EARTH-SCIENCE!
BUT EVEN MORE MIND-SHATTERING--
--I'VE SEEN THE ENERGY-FUSION PRINCIPLES IN THIS DEVICE USED ON ONLY ONE OTHER PLANET--KRYPTON!
I WAS CURIOUS ABOUT THIS "COMMANDANT" BEFORE...BUT NOW IT'S IMPERATIVE I MEET HIM!
SOON! IT IS TIME FOR GOODBYES BACK ON THE STREET...
IT'S BEEN SOME AFTERNOON FOR US TOO, MR. KENT! AND DON'T FORGET--NOTHIN' ABOUT THE COMMANDANT IN YOUR ARTICLE!
YOU HAVE MY WORD, SONNY--
--NO ONE WILL HEAR ABOUT HIM FROM ME!
--FROM SUPERMAN IS ANOTHER MATTER!
SOMETHIN' ABOUT THAT KENT CHARACTER! I'M WILLING TO LAY ODDS THAT UNDER THOSE SPECS HE'S A LOT TOUGHER THAN HE LOOKS!
AND WE'LL LAY ODDS THAT NEXT ISSUE WILL BE ALL-OUT ACTION WHEN "SUPERMAN MEETS THE ZOD SQUAD!" ON SALE AUG. 25TH! IT'S A DATE!